

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EURE-00 /066 W

-----012011Z 026371 /63

P R 011800Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 518

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 4253

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: ELECTION CAMPAIGN ONE-THIRD OVER

REF: A. MADRID 4030 B. MADRID 3826

SUMMARY: THE CURTAIN FELL YESTERDAY ON THE FIRST WEEK OF THE OFFICIAL THREE-WEEK CAMPAIGN PERIOD WHICH BEGAN ON MAY 24. THE MOST NOTABLE FEATURES OF THE CAMPAIGN THUS FAR, AND WHICH WE HOPE (BUT CANNOT BE SURE) WILL CONTINUE TO CHARACTERIZE IT TO THE END, HAVE BEEN THE RELATIVE NORMALCY WHICH HAS OBTAINED AND THE RELATIVE MODERATION, IN BOTH STYLE AND SUBSTANCE, OF ALL THE MAJOR PARTICIPANTS, WITH THE FREQUENT EXCEPTION OF FRAGA'S ALIANZA
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POPULAR, WHERE FRAGA'S COMBATIVE PERSONAL STYLE, EGGED ON BY LEFTIST HECKLERS, AND THE HARD-LINE NATURE OF MUCH OF AP'S LEADERS' RHETORIC HAVE PRECIPITATED MORE THAN THEIR SHARE OF CONTROVERSY AND CONTRETEMPS. TO BE SURE, THERE HAVE BEEN SCATTERED INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE, AND THE SPANISH PENCHANT FOR OUTRAGEOUS INSULT HAS NOT BEEN MISSING, BUT THE FIRST WEEK WENT BETTER THAN MANY

HAD THOUGHT. END SUMMARY.

1. EXCEPT FOR SCATTERED DUST-UPS, USUALLY INVOLVING ATTACKS BY THE RIGHTIST THOUGHT ON YOUTHS HANGING POSTERS OF LEFT PARTIES IN THE WEE HOURS, BUT INCLUDING SOME ASSAULTS BY LEFTISTS ON RIGHTISTS AS WELL, THE CAMPAIGN THUS FAR HAS BEEN A PICTURE OF ORDERLINESS AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY. WHILE THERE ALSO HAVE BEEN SOME SHORT-LIVED DISTURBANCES AT THE SCENE OF PARTY RALLIES, IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT EVEN THE FARLEFT AND THE FARRIGHT PARTICIPANTS HAVE GENERALLY ESCHEWED TACTICS OF PHYSICAL CONFRONTATION, STICKING INSTEAD TO THE PREDICTABLE THOUGH LAMENTABLE, VERBAL VIOLENCE.

2. IN MANY CASES IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH AMONG THE PARTIES ON THE BASIS OF THEIR LEADERS' PROGRAMMATIC PRONOUNCEMENTS. ALL THE MAJOR GROUPS (ALIANZA POPULAR, CENTRO DEMOCRATICO, THE RUIZ GIMENEZ/GIL ROBLES CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, THE SOCIALISTS (PSOE AND PSP) AND THE PCE) TEND TO ACCENTUATE THEMES OF MODERATION, POLITICAL EVOLUTION, AND ORDER. THE PERFORMANCES OF AP AND THE PCE, HOWEVER, HAVE BEEN LESS THAN CREDIBLE. THE CONTINUING STRESS OF AP LEADERS ON THEIR LINKS WITH THE PAST REINFORCES DOUBTS IN MANY QUARTERS ABOUT THEIR COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY, WHILE THE PCE LEADERSHIP HAS ADOPTED SUCH A PIOUS POSTURE THAT SECGEN CARRILLO HAS BEEN DUBBED BY SOME "FRAY" SANTIAGO.

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3. THE STYLE OF THE CAMPAIGN ALREADY IS WELL SET.
THE LEFT PARTIES CONTINUE TO CONCENTRATE ON MASSIVE RALLIES,
MANY OF THEM RANGING IN ATTENDANCE FROM 20,000 TO
40.000 AND MORE, WHILE CENTRO DEMOCRATICO EMPHASIZES
INNUMERABLE "ENCOUNTERS" BETWEEN COALITION LEADERS AND
SMALL GROUPS (USUALLY A FEW HUNDRED) OF CITIZENS, AND
AP TENDS TO STICK TO IN-DOOR RALLIES INVOLVING A FEW
THOUSAND PARTICIPANTS AND EXTREMELY TIGHT SECURITY
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MEASURES. MANY ALIANZA RALLIES HAVE BEEN MARRED BY
DISTURBANCES PRECIPITATED BY HECKLERS, WHO MUST THEN
BE PHYSICALLY EJECTED BY AP'S SECURITY PERSONNEL. THIS
HAS BROUGHT AP TO HOLD A NUMBER OF RECENT RALLIES BY
INVITATION ONLY.

4. AS FOR ESTIMATES OF RELATIVE STRENGTH AT THE END OF THE
FIRST WEEK. THESE STILL FALL MORE IN THE REALM OF
GUESS WORK THAN OF RELIABLE DATA, EXCEPT FOR THE CONCLU-
SION THAT THE SUAREZ-LED CENTRO DEOMCRATICO (UCD) IS
RUNNING COMFORTABLY IN FIRST PLACE, THOUGH THE PROJECTED
UCD SHOWING VARIES WIDELY ACCORDING TO THE ANALYST (30 PER CENT
TO 45 PER CENT WITH THE USUAL VIEW, BASED ON EXTRAPOLATION,
THAT THEY WILL GET 35 TO 40 PER CENT OF THE VOTE). MOST
OBSERVERS CONTINUE TO AGREE WITH THE THESIS (REFTEL)
THAT THE PSOE HAS GAINED GROUND AND WILL BE THE NUMBER
TWO VOTE GETTER NATION-WISE (20 TO 25 PER CENT) AND THE ALIANZA
POPULAR HAS CLEARLY SLIPPED INTO THIRD PLACE (15 PER CENT
OR MAYBE EVEN LESS) AS SUAREZ'S STRENGTH IN THE PROVINCES AN
THE POSTURE OF THE ALIANZA POPULAR'S OWN LEADER-
SHIP COALITION. WE AGAIN NOTE THAT THE RESULTS WILL
ALMOST CERTAINLY GUARANTEE SUAREZ'S RETENTION IN THE
PRIME MINISSTRY, BUT AT THE SAME TIME THEY WILL FACE
HIM WITH THE NECESSITY OF CONSTRUCTING A PARLIAMENTARY
COALITION FROM ELEMENTS OUTSIDE THE UCD (ITSELF A COALI-
TION OF SOMEWHAT UNEASY ALLIESN A TASK FOR WHICH THERE
ARE SEVERAL OPTIONS BUT NOT EASY ANSWERS.

5. IT IS MORE THAN EVER CLEAR THAT IT IS GOING TO BE
VERY DIFFICULT TO GET ANY SORT OF A HANDLE OF THE SENATE
RACE. THE NATURE OF THE SENATE ELECTORAL SYSTEM (FOUR
SEATS PER PROVINCE--THE VOTER VOTES FOR THREE CANDIDATES
FROM A SINGLE STRAIGHT ALPHABETICAL LIST, AND THE FIRST
FOUR CANDIDATES PAST THE POST WIN) COMPLICATES PREDIC-
TION. THE SENATE IS LESS POWERFUL BUT NONETHELESS
IMPORTANT AND COULD PRODUCE CONSIDERABLE VARIANCE FROM
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THE LOWER HOUSE NORM. STABLER

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Message Attributes

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